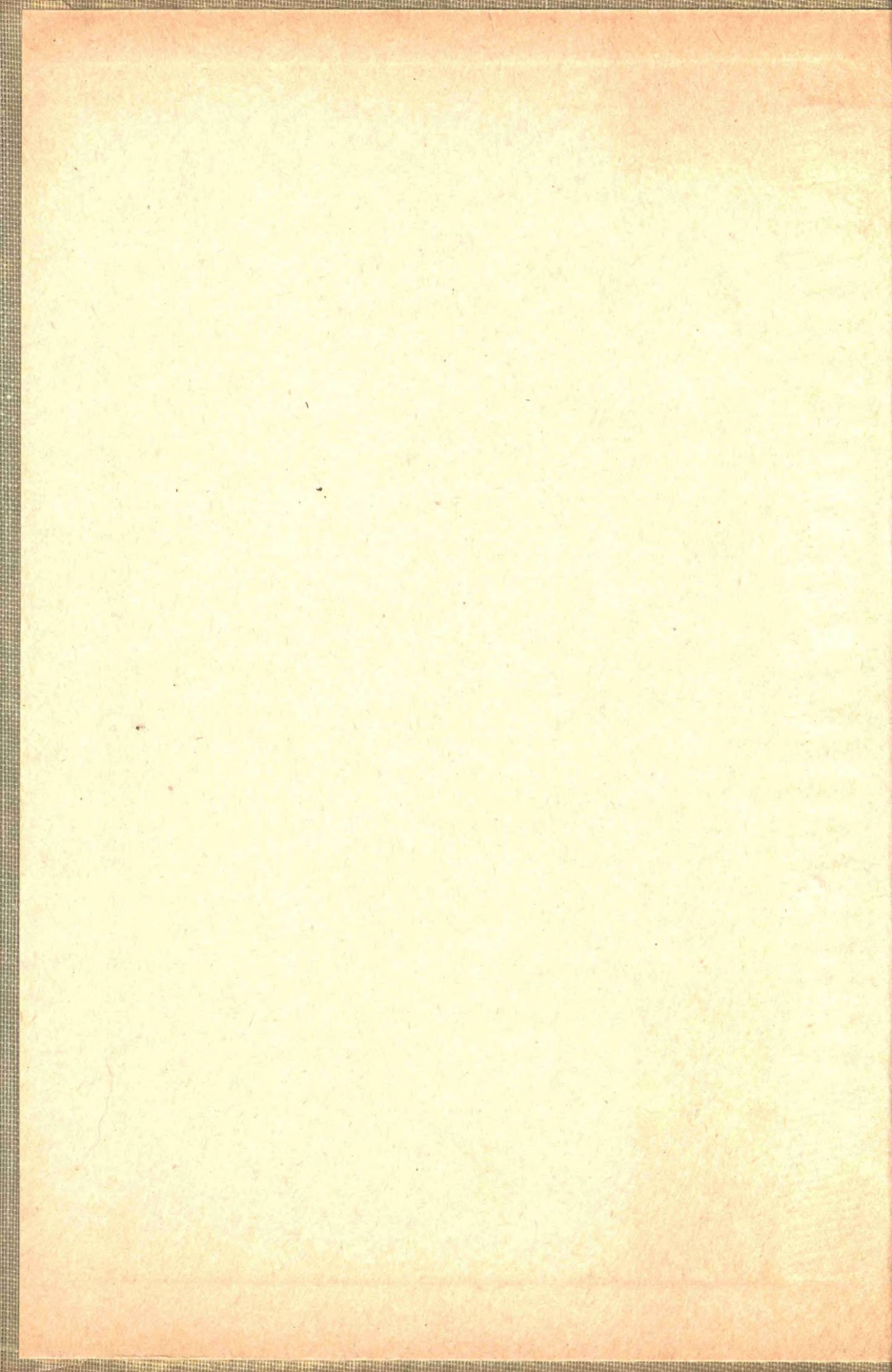


*A Cape Cod Idyl*

BY  
FAITH BICKFORD





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Susan Tunny,

with loving greetings  
from her friend,

Faith Phelps &

Abolitionists

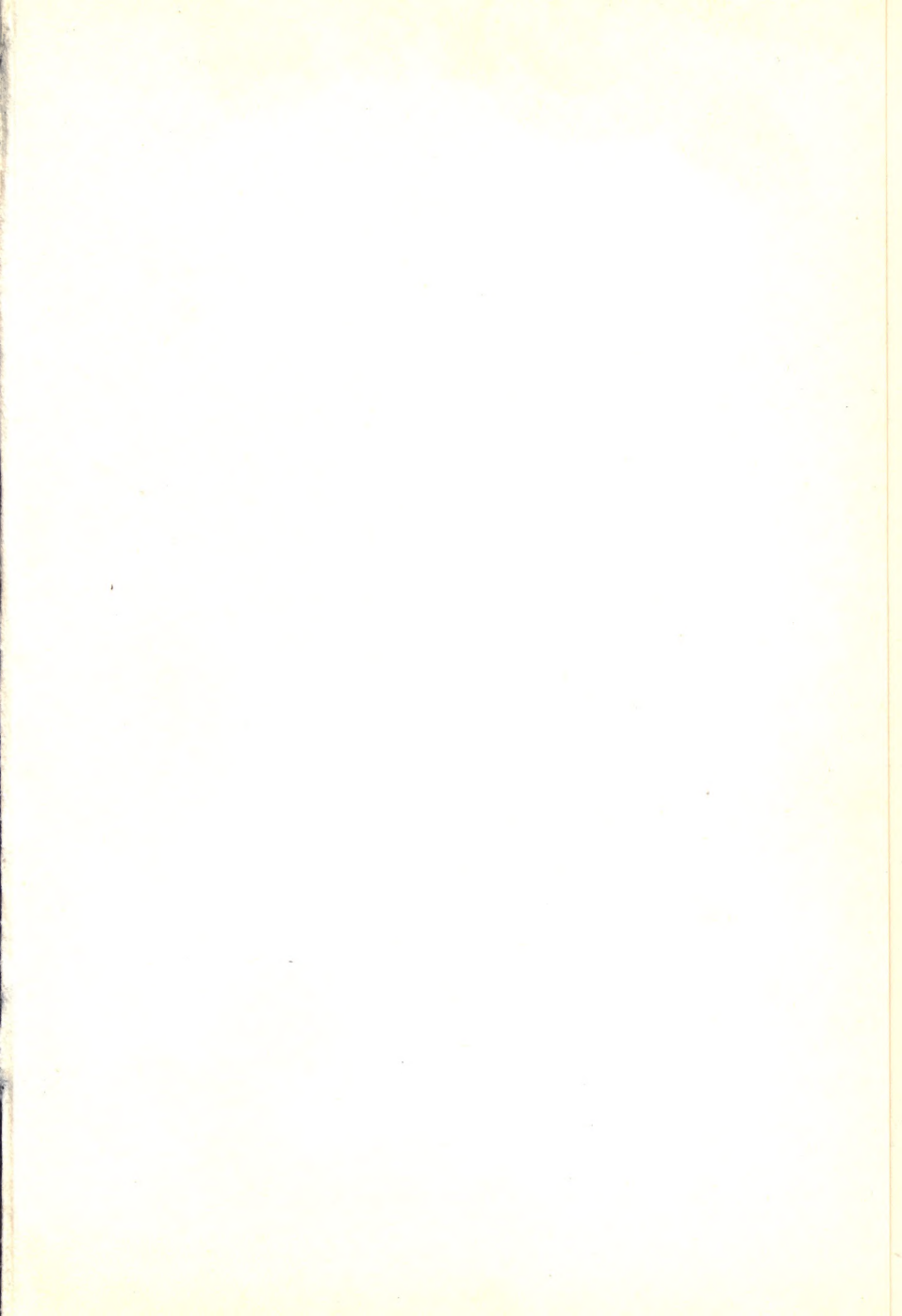
Aug 5-57







*A Cape Cod Idyl*









"Cape Cod Dunes"

Charles W. Slack —

"The undulating dunes, wild and free, seem always calling me to fly far and high and happy, like the sea gulls wayfaring in the upper air." Page 30.





# *A Cape Cod Idyl*

BY

FAITH BICKFORD

AUTHOR OF

"DADDY JOE'S FIDDLE" and "GLORIA"



BREWSTER-ON-THE-CAPE  
MASSACHUSETTS

1948

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*To my Sea Pines associates  
this little book is gratefully inscribed.*





*November eighth, 1898*

A BEAUTIFUL thing has happened to me, Hope Freeman, so marvelous I can scarcely write about it, and yet I must. Tonight, sitting alone here in my little room beneath the eaves, I seem to feel akin to the ancients, trying to record the messages of the whirlwind, and the earthquake. Yes, and of the "still small voice."

In a way, it all started when I *knew* I must try once more to tell Tia Marta of my great need to go away to study. The school teacher at the Corners has taught me all she can. There is no one else. The decision to make Tia understand must have been in my mind all night, for when I awoke early this morning, I sprang out of bed, determined to speak.

Whatever the mystery of my life may be, I am convinced that my aunt could explain it if she would. Since I came to her six years ago, she has never been willing to speak of my mother's family or of my father, her husband's brother.

Madre pictured my father to me so clearly that, though he died before I was born, his appearance is very vivid, as vivid as the beautiful face of my mother, as my love for her paints it, though I cannot plainly see it. Always the thought of her steals in and out of my mind like a thin sweet song, guid-

ing me with its memory of my childhood promises to her.

This morning my promises to Madre seemed almost to lead the way as I went downstairs through the kitchen, where Tia Marta's early breakfast things were still on the table waiting for me to wash them, and out through the woodhouse to the summer shed to find Tia Marta screening cranberries.

The old gray shed, Tia's worn gray shawl crossed in front and tied under her arms, and her faded gray apron all harmonized; even her gray hair with its tight little pug at the back, and her sad, stern eyes fitted into this gray November day. The echo of Madre's song lost itself in the clinging mists. I paused in the doorway, my courage already beginning to fail.

"Tia Marta," I began.

"Did you do the dishes?" she asked.

"No, not yet. I want to tell you something first," I said.

"Well?" She didn't look up, only continued pushing the cranberries back and forth with one hand while she sorted out the brush and dry leaves with the other.

"I want to go away to study . . ." I started.

"Well, you can't," she declared. And I couldn't begin again. Such discord seemed to fill the old shed. I steadied myself against the door frame.

"You can't go one step," she repeated. "You are too delicate. You know your Spanish ancestry wasn't trained to stand much."

This was more than I could bear. My eyes were so

full of tears I couldn't see her lips. I turned away and stumbled out the door. It was no use. She would never try to help me. Scarcely heeding my steps, I followed the old road behind the barn, across the fields, between the swamps, until I came to my own special spot,—a small space among the pines, with one side open to the sea. The beach grass makes it all silvery green in summer, and golden brown in winter. How often I have lain there, listening to the lovely music of the out-of-doors or of my own thoughts. I have read that our human minds are made up partly of the things that happened to our ancestors. Sometimes mine seems to be full of the music that I never heard, my mother's, before she died, and the music of my grandfather whom I have never seen. She could not bear to speak of him because she had hurt him by putting her love for my father before his plan for her career. Sometimes when all these songs of the past seem singing in my veins, I have imagined that perhaps it may have been this old music that called and beckoned me,—a deaf girl who could not express the lilting melodies of her race, but felt and heard them in her heart. But then afterward, listening, listening in the stillness at night, the harmony seemed to come from the stars or the moonlight. And once, when Ezekial Snow brought his sister's little baby into our house and I took her in my arms and looked deep into her wide-apart purple eyes, the song seemed to come from them.

But today, after my failure with Tia Marta, as I threw myself upon the ground, all sweet tunes were



lost, and only ugly, jarring clamor seemed to fill the air. Yet, in spite of all my distress, I could not wholly forget my mother's teaching.

Long ago, almost before I could remember, Madre had tried to interpret the true meaning of harmony to her little deaf child. I had felt then in my childishness that I understood.

"*Escucha!*" she would whisper, "*Los ángeles te cantan.*" "Listen, the angels sing to thee." And with all my baby soul on tiptoe I would listen. Even now I can feel her rapt, tender look upon me; and then in the dread stillness of her going—the pain of which I cannot even now allow myself to think about, for the darkness that falls upon me—then I would have died, it seems, had not her words come back to comfort me. Over and over I had said the verse she always repeated to me when she kissed me goodnight. "He shall give his angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways." And I had often heard it in my dreams,—the singing of the angels she had taught me to hear. Yes, deep in my heart I knew that the real music came from the angels, because Madre had said so, and I felt that her sureness was true.

That was in California where she had lived since she left her native land for my father's sake, and where I was born; and then after she went, too, and the neighbors could find no trace of other relatives, they sent me far across the country to Tia Marta down on Cape Cod. My mother had written her once and my aunt had answered and Madre had

taught me to call her Tia. I knew, too, that Tia Marta was the widow of my father's brother. But Tia was so different from Madre. And though I knew English, having heard it all around me always, still it was not the language of my heart, because my mother and I, when we were all alone, always spoke Spanish.

The Cape-land had seemed very strange to me at first, and yet, after I had wandered, as children do, over the fields behind the house, I found that even here the inner music seemed to be everywhere about me; on the sand dunes where wild roses and bayberry bushes and beach grass were tangled, in the winds sweeping up from the bay over the rocks and tide pools of the sun-tinted sands. The music seemed to come, too, from the friendly little pine trees and from the stony pastures, and most of all from the far reaches of blue where sky and ocean met. Little by little, as I grew more at ease, the Cape had become vibrant with a sweet, wistful harmony that soothed and strengthened my child heart. Sometimes as I lay beneath the branching pines or among the long swinging beach grasses, the earth around was like my cradle and the sky was like my mother. So I learned to love Cape Cod and to call it home.

But today, I could not hear the dear sweet rhythm Madre had taught me to listen for and to find. I had tried to be happy, and to be patient with Tia Marta's cold, queer ways that kept me from doing the things most girls take for granted. I had not fretted when she refused to let me go to school with

the children but made me study evenings with the district school teacher in our kitchen, and in the daytime do housework with her, or rest, or spend long times out of doors with no one to talk with. She seemed to think that because my outer ears were different from other girls' I must be brought up separately. In California I had played with the little boys and girls and with my mother, but on the Cape we live a long way from any neighbors and even Sunday School is denied me because Tia always requires me to sit in the pew with her at church. Madre had said I must listen for the heavenly song and that the angels would never leave me, and I had tried and never despaired until now, when it really seemed that Tia Marta's harshness had drowned out all the beauty.

Madre said I read lips so well that others would not notice that my ears were different, and that the music of concerts and symphonies was only a wonderful imitation of true music, the inner music of high heaven.

Tia Marta had no right to deprive me of my education. I had promised Madre I would learn to write. I was only a very little girl when I told her I would be a writer some day, and I had been very earnest in my promise. Through all the years I have never forgotten. Every girl, I suppose, has her dreams, but my promise is more than a dream.

"Learn to write out your thoughts, little Hope," Madre had said. "Listen to the inner loveliness and express for others what it tells you, so that those who cannot hear the angels sing so clearly may learn



how to listen. Long ago, the wisest man of all explained about people having ears that hear not. You have the true hearing," she had told me. "You cannot be sad, if you listen."

*November ninth*

LAST evening my room was so cold I couldn't go on writing. So I waited until this morning to finish telling about my wonderful day. Now the breakfast dishes are washed, my bedroom work is done, and all my morning chores, and I am writing in the sunshine by the kitchen window. Ezekial Snow is piling seaweed around the foundations of our little house. Even though it's only November, Tia Marta likes to make sure we are ready for an unexpected nor'wester. Tia Marta has gone back to screening her cranberries out in the shed. Taffy, our big yellow kitty, is curled up on the window sill.

I will begin again about yesterday. All that happened is still very clear to me.

As I lay on the dried grass in my secret spot among the pines on the dunes facing the sea, my will to try to keep my promise to Madre seemed gone. Madre had said that the angels would guide me, and I had felt that they were near, until yesterday, when my faith faded. I began to wonder if I had heard the heavenly singing, after all.

I was just a stupid, half-Spanish deaf girl whose mother and father were dead, and whose aunt had no use for schooling beyond the three R's. No, I would not try any more. I would give up. I would be

like Tia Marta, drudging along day after day, and by and by probably I would wear spectacles and even maybe have a tight little pug at the back of my head.

While all this growling and grumbling was within me and great wicked sobs of discouragement were shaking my heart, a different outside noise came pressing in upon me. It reached me every little while through my inner confusion and then died away as my own discord grew louder. But by and by, I could shut it out no longer. I had been lying with my face to the ground, but now I sat up and opened my eyes. To my astonishment, a great windstorm was approaching. The grass was waving, the trees were shaking. Through the opening I could see the bay roaring and raging.

Suddenly a vast blackness rolled over the sky; then came perfect stillness. The tumult within was hushed, so that for the instant only my own heart-throbs were in the air. The autumn leaves hung limp; the grasses stood poised; even the waves seemed to pause breathlessly. It was in that still, tense break in the storm that I clearly heard a voice. I cannot quite say in words what it told me. At first I was ashamed and then a great longing came to try again to keep my promise to Madre. And I knew once more that she had been right. I could hear the inner music if I were good and patient and true.

Then a far-off jar shook the ground—a sudden clash, as of a mighty orchestra, and a flash, cutting the sky with a sword of fire—and I was frightened.

There was a little cave nearby, a sort of dugout under a shelving rock. I had often played there, or had waited the passing of a quick shower. Stumbling to this rough shelter, I crept in, half falling. I found myself on my knees. In my fear, I cried out to God, "Oh, help me to try again. Show me how to keep my promise to Madre!" I suppose I didn't talk out loud, but my prayer was real.

After a while the wind died down. And now a deep calm came over me. It was as if a sweet and holy tenderness was folding me in, away from the storm. The goodness came from the center of the earth. Or was it from somewhere beyond the white-capped bay? Or maybe from the brightening sky? I seemed to hear thin strains of singing like a calling, comforting voice—then, again and again, until I heard my own thought answering, though my lips never moved and no words were in my mind. The distant notes came louder, stronger, nearer, until my whole spirit seemed almost shouting in reply, and finally the music of the inner earth and the outer sky and the wide sea came together within me in a great anthem that made the little cave tremble as I knelt in its shelter. Maybe there was really a slight earthquake going on. I don't know. But I felt like a lily in the wind. The only words I can remember saying are "*Escucha! Los ángeles te cantan*"—the words my mother had so often said to me. But I knew I need never trouble any more about going away to study. I knew I was God's child, surrounded by His loving care, and that if I could always let my



life sing back its music in rhythm with the singing of the universe, I would learn the lessons that counted most. And after all, perhaps it didn't really matter so much about my writing. I must live first,—and live with God's thoughts of beauty and loving trust.

So from now on I must sing, as Madre had taught me; sing for Tia Marta; sing for old Ezekial; sing for the dunes and the pines; sing for Hope Freeman. This was the meaning of the inner music which had haunted me so long; the angels were telling me to answer with my thoughts—with my loving—just here on the Cape, or wherever I might be. I must send back a song until the stars and the tides and the hills and I would all be singing together.

As I looked out over the dunes to the sea growing bluer beneath a brightening cloud, all at once I felt something hard beneath my knee. I reached for it, almost without thinking, and suddenly I was holding a little red leather-covered book. In my amazement I saw that although it was fairly dry and new, one corner was ragged as if a chipmunk had chewed it.

I was very happy. A book! Books mean so much! But what was my disappointment a moment later, to find as I turned its pages that they were blank. I would have welcomed so eagerly a poem or a story, and instead found just empty pages with a pretty, misleading cover!

Yet, as I held the book in my hand, a wonderful plan came to me. Why should I not make use of

these fresh white pages? The angels had sent them for me to write on,—each day some new thought, some new understanding of Nature and . . .

Why, what was I thinking? Of Nature as a *teacher*. And it was a teacher that I needed most. Often Nature's beauty had spoken to me, but never before had I found any way of answering. All the loveliness in the world called out to me, caressingly, entreatingly, but I could not answer in return. Here at last was my opportunity for expression. Of course, I did not really believe that Nature could interpret Latin or geometry to me, but Latin and geometry didn't matter so much any more. A firm, true faith that Nature could do something toward educating Hope Freeman grew strong and clear. It grew until I was glad once more for my beautiful name, and full of courage.

Every day I would write down the lessons that Nature taught me. I would make it my recitation to her, my own reply to her teaching.

I turned the pages softly now, almost reverently. I was very happy. Everything, even the little cave, seemed different. Suddenly my breath almost stopped, for the front page had fluttered open before me. There were words written there, dear Spanish words, home words that spoke to me of Madre just at the sight of them. I read slowly, trying to find their meaning. Is it any wonder that I was sure they came straight from the angels? Above the Spanish lines were English words, as if they belonged together, just as my Spanish mother and American father did.

"O joy supreme! I know the Voice  
Like none beside on earth or sea!  
Yea, more, O soul of mine, rejoice!  
By all that He requires of me,  
I know what God Himself must be.

I fear no more. The clouded face  
Of Nature smiles; through all her things  
Of time and space and sense I trace  
The moving of the Spirit's wings,  
And hear the song of hope she sings."

And my name is Hope! Did anything so wonderful as this ever happen to anyone else? How good I ought to be, and how patient! No matter what happens to me now, I have heard the Voice. I am beginning to understand the inner music, which is beyond all Nature's "things of time and space and sense." I am really finding out what God "requires of me." I have only to sing back the song that comes, with loving thoughts and trust and courage. Madre was right. There really are no deaf ears, and the true music is all around us if only we listen.

*November tenth*

WHEN I came home, Tia Marta was very angry with me. She thought I had run away because she wouldn't let me go to school. Of course I was right here on the place all the time, but she couldn't know that and she was worried. I am so sorry. I should think she would know me better, after all these years, but she doesn't. She just looks at my outside. She knows my hair is dark and short and curly, and she knows my eyes are brown, and that I am sort of brown all over, and not very fat; but she doesn't know the real me at all.

Sometimes last spring, when we were walking to church together in the soft June-time, with the wild roses and the yarrow and the tansy growing beside the road, when the big poplars bent and met overhead with the silver of their leaves making poetry against the sky, and the smell of the ocean and the flowers all mixed up together were enough to make you dance and shout with the joy and rhythm of them all,—at such times I looked at her as I imagine a blind man might look at a picture. He knows it's there but he doesn't see it. I suppose nobody can understand Tia Marta, at least nobody ever seems to. She has seen a hard life, always. She had no mother, when she was little, to teach her, as I had, and her father must have been a very cruel man be-



cause he used to break the furniture when he was angry. She didn't even love her husband, my father's brother, I think, because she was too much afraid of him. Perhaps she thought he'd grow to be like her father. I guess she married just to get away from her father. No wonder her heart is full of discord. Only I wish I could help her to hear the angels' music. It seems as if there would be no use in going away to study or in learning to write at all if I couldn't help Tia Marta first to be happy. I wish I dared steal my arms around her neck the way I did with Madre. Maybe then she would know I really love her and that I wouldn't run away from her for anything. Some day I'll dare myself to do it and see what happens.

Today when Tia sent me down on the bluffs to gather bayberries, I discovered a mystery. (She gathers bayberries for the Arts and Crafts woman who makes candles.)

I'd gone just over the hill when I thought I smelled smoke. We on the Cape are always careful to investigate that warning. I ran up on Foster Knoll to look, and, sure enough, there was a stream coming right out over the trees of the little grove of pines that hides the old Higgins cottage. I was afraid tramps had been fooling around there and set the place afire. So I raced down the narrow road overgrown with locusts and horse brier until I came into sight of the house. It's a small, low, one-story building, over a hundred and fifty years old; it's covered with ivy and surrounded by beach plum bushes which stand out in early autumn like fire

against the deep blue of the sparkling ocean. As soon as I saw the chimney, I knew the house was all right. The door was open and, for the first time since I could remember, the windows had white curtains.

There was nothing strange about the place, except that I had never seen it open, but as I stood a few yards off, studying the quaint, lovely picture, a most mysterious excitement stole over me. I could scarcely keep my feet from going down the path and in at the door. Who had come to live in such a queer place? For years the tradition that "Old Higgins' ghost" stayed there had scared people away. Of course I didn't believe that, but still I must admit that there seemed to be something unexplainable in the air, something weird and wistful and yet something noble and true. I grew frightened and ran away as fast as I could run. When I told Tia Marta about it she seemed real interested, but she laughed at my fear. She said she heard the other day that the old Higgins house had been rented. She hoped they wouldn't set the woods afire. "Probably they are gunners. The shooting law is off. They won't stay long in that old place, at least not decent folks won't," she muttered.

Oh, I almost forgot to record Nature's lesson for today. She taught it just as I hurried home through the pines. Everything was turning with last night's frost, and all the flowers were gone, even the asters. But one little clump of blazing star was still bright. It was so brave and strong and gay the cold hadn't reached it. I dug it up and brought it home and it

seemed to say, "You see how it is, Hope, if you keep on being your very brightest, no matter how discouraged you get, if you don't give up and wither, God sends His angels to help you."

After I'd set the table, while Tia Marta fried the scallops for supper, I found a little brown jar and potted the flower and set it in the middle of the table. It made everything look different, though Tia Marta's house is always clean. And she smiled when she saw it just in front of her plate, under the hanging lamp. I was afraid she'd think it was in the way, but she didn't. We were very cozy as we sat down to the table.

"Some one might find me," I thought, "the way I found the blazing star. But whether or not, I'm going to try to find Tia Marta." Maybe I imagined it, but it seemed as if her face wasn't quite so hard tonight; and once when I looked up suddenly she was watching me with the strangest expression. Perhaps it was the little flower that did it, although I think it was the new understanding in my heart. I think she caught faint sounds of my song of trust. I suppose wanting your thoughts to sing together with other people's makes a kind of music in itself, a kind of music like the angels', which only the inner ear can hear.

## *November eleventh*

**T**HOUGH the calendar still says November, it's summer again. This morning when I woke very early I looked into fairyland. There was a soft gray veil hanging from all the trees; a silvery network was spread over the grass; and across the sky behind the trees pink clouds trailed, sending pale rose tints into the mist and making it glow, hazily and driftingly, like a dream. And from every nearby twig and stem hung a shining fire opal of dew.

By ten o'clock the grass was dry; the day was clear and golden; here and there a bluebird flashed. If the leaves had covered the trees, the day surely would have been like May.

The cranberries are all finished, and Tia Marta has begun fall housecleaning. We worked together until two o'clock, when she sent me outdoors and began dressing herself for the Ladies' Sewing Circle. I am so thankful I'm supposed to spend two hours a day in the open. I am afraid if I weren't, I would have to do housework all the time. Not that I need care because of delicate health. Dear me, no! That's just a notion of Tia Marta's. I am as strong as an ox, and as healthy as a russet pear. But bless my shoe leather, as Ezekial says, who wants to stay in the



house and scour and dust when the wind and the sun and the sea are calling? I don't.

Well, Tia Marta donned her second-best dress and her second-best bonnet and second-best shawl, and I was sent outdoors. So I wandered down toward my secret nook by the sea and then, without really intending to do so, through the pasture and between the pines, over the hill, nearer and nearer the old Higgins cottage. As the place came into view, again I saw the windows open, and smoke curling up from the chimney. Again I was frightened. There was an unusual sweetness in the air and yet a sort of sadness. I was drawn irresistibly until I found myself rounding a corner of the little house and standing spell-bound before an old man with the strangest, kindest, wisest face I have ever seen. He was sitting in the doorway in a big armchair and he had red house slippers on his feet. He was playing a violin. His hair was white and hung almost to his shoulders. His eyes were closed, so he didn't notice me at first. I had come softly, as if following a call I couldn't explain. His fingers were slender and white and sure as he drew his bow across the strings. He made such a delicate, appealing picture. The sunshine, falling on his silvery hair and touching his polished instrument, streamed softly all over him.

As I watched the flying bow, and the thought-lights playing on the beautiful face like reflections of clouds passing over a lake, I felt—oh, I can never describe the mood that fell upon me as I stood a long time looking at him.

Then suddenly he opened his eyes and saw me.

"Niña," I saw his lips say. Before I could answer, a keen, blue-eyed young man with closely shaven face and short light hair appeared in the doorway.

"Am I dreaming?" asked the old man.

"No, Señor," answered his friend, "the little stranger is almost weeping over your music. She stole up quietly while you were playing and has nearly eaten you with her eyes."

I came closer to the older gentleman and impulsively knelt down beside him. He put his hand on my head and, without thinking, I whispered to him in Spanish. It hadn't occurred to me to speak in English, though I did not stop to realize then, as I do now in looking back, that it had been years since I had spoken Spanish, except in my prayers.

"*Quién es la niña?*" he asked trembling violently and half rising in excitement.

"Only a little brown bird of a girl, Señor," soothed the young man. "See how silky and black her curls are, and how smooth and soft her cheeks. Her lips are like . . ." But here I turned away my head and didn't see what he said. How could he joke about me while that poor old gentleman was so troubled?

"*Otra vez! Otra vez!*" I coaxed. "Again! Again!"

"Who are you?" he asked in Spanish.

"I am a musician," I answered, "but I cannot play the violin. My music is all in my heart." He turned his face toward mine while the sunlight searched each line and look. Then he fingered my hair a moment.

"*Cómo se llama usted?*" he asked, his eyes alight with eagerness. "*Cómo se llama usted, Niña?*"

"Hope Freeman," I told him, my breath still difficult in the joy of finding a Spanish friend. "And I live with Tia Marta in the little white house over the hill." Then I made bold to ask his name.

He drew a quick, deep breath. "Tomás Henríque," he replied, with a slight air of dignity, as though he were proud of his name.

"My mother came from Spain," I said, softly. And as we talked there together, the old man in his chair and I kneeling beside him, the teasing look slowly faded from the younger man's face and he seemed to realize for the first time that because of the music we had a sweet kinship between us,—the dear violinist and I. Going into the house, he left us a few moments, and while he was gone—I can't tell what we said, nor how, but I told the kind musician all about my ears and my promise to Madre, and he has said he would help me with Tia Marta.

"I will play for her," he said. "Violin music often softens the heart."

"Oh, I hope it will, but one never knows what Tia Marta will enjoy and what she won't."

When the young man, whose name I learned was John Dyer, came back, Señor Henríque and I were laughing like two children. I was never, never so happy in all my life. I was hearing a new kind of music,—a happier, gayer kind than any since Madre went.

John Dyer said I was like a tonic to his friend, and when I left I promised to return tomorrow. I can scarcely wait. But I haven't told Tia Marta about my new friends yet. She had a crick in her back

when I came in, and I couldn't rub it and watch her lips at the same time, so I didn't talk. I shall tell her about them tomorrow.

Oh, it is beautiful to think I've found a real musician. I told him of this little book, too, and Nature's teaching me, and then I almost wished I hadn't, for it made the tears come into his eyes. A happy, surprised look followed, as though he had thought of a little secret all his own.



*November twelfth*

WHAT shall I do? Oh what shall I ever do? I told Tia Marta about my new friends, and she didn't understand. She said it wouldn't be proper for a young girl like me to go running to strangers' houses. I tried to explain to her that musicians are different. They don't think so much about things being proper or not proper, just honest and glad. Then she said the hardest thing of all. She said I *wasn't a musician*. Of course, I shouldn't have expected her to understand when she couldn't. I just forgot. She said we'd make mincemeat today for Thanksgiving; that would take up my mind and help me to think of something practical. I can't see how any reasonably bright person could make mincemeat six years in succession by the same recipe and then in the seventh year find it exciting. But I chopped the meat and things, and put in the spice, and wondered all the time how I could honorably let Señor Henríque know I couldn't keep my promise to visit him.

It did seem as though things were just beginning to brighten up a little when they all grew dark again. While we worked, I watched Tia Marta and tried to make out what sort of music she hears. Every heart hears some song if we can only know it. The back of her head looked so tight, with its hard little

pug; and when she turned around, her mouth looked tight too. She's gone now to sort apples. When she comes back, it will be more chopping. I am writing on the kitchen table while I wait.

\* \* \*

Now it is night time; I am up in my room. After awhile she came back. I was paring more apples. She said suddenly. "What did you mean, child, about being a musician? You couldn't keep a tune on a mouth organ! You don't imagine a deaf person can play, do you?"

The tears had wanted to come all morning, and it was harder than ever to hold them back now, but I did it, thinking how this was the first time she'd ever tried to talk intimately with me. I got up and filled my pan with fresh apples from the basket.

"I don't mean playing, Tia Marta. I guess it's too difficult to call it playing. You know it always seems strange to me that the English should call music-making *playing*. I like the Spanish word better; it means 'touching.' In Spanish we say 'touching the piano.' That's more what I mean. It's—it's hard to explain," I faltered, "because unless you have wanted very, very much, and with your whole soul, to make earth music and something has taught you that heavenly music is better—I am afraid one couldn't understand unless—one—were—deaf."

I said this last almost whispering; it was so hard to talk about.

"Go on," said Tia Marta, uncorking the hard

cider she saves just especially for Thanksgiving pies. And she said something more that surprised me.

"I wanted to play the fiddle once myself. I—" Then she stopped. I waited for her to finish, but pretty soon she said so crossly I almost cut my finger with the paring knife, "Why don't you go on?"

Somehow I didn't mind her crossness at all. It seemed as if I could hear a faint sweet song in the room; like the trembling fragrance of a faded rose maybe it was.

"I've always wanted to tell you about it, Tia Marta," I said. "Madre found out very early, oh, when I was so very, very little, that music always affected me. Though the doctor who tested me said I couldn't really hear, it gave me wonderful, happy feelings and bright, brave thoughts, so that I was always begging for more. She sang and played and often took me to concerts. After a little time, as I grew a year or two older, I kept trying to 'make music' as I called it. I would sit at the piano and crash out queer noises for myself; I would try to sing. Mother had teachers for me and they did their best; I could speak very nicely, but it was no use. There was real music in me,—lovely, free, cloud-music, but I couldn't make it on the piano, not real music." Then I couldn't go on, for a moment.

Tia Marta was standing by the table now; her hands, for once, were idle, and looking into her eyes had made it easier for me to talk to her than at any time since I had come to live with her.

"Madre must have suffered a great deal," I said,

after a little. "She was without my father and was not able to go to her own father for some strange reason which she would never tell me, but I am sure it had something to do with music. This I knew, though, that my grandfather was a famous musician. She would never speak his name to me. And she had wanted me to be a musician. She wanted me to make up for something in which she had seemed to fail him before I was born. But after awhile my ears were different. They heard the heavenly sounds but they couldn't hear the earthly tones."

Tia Marta had sat down, close to me, and was helping pare the apples, the pan between us. I remember now how her fingers were trembling. But then I only thought of my story, and of somehow making her understand. It seemed as if all my chance to go away to study depended on this.

"Madre prayed God to show her what to do," I managed to say, "and He did. He made her realize that music is harmony and begins in the inner world before it is heard by the outer ear, and that nearly every human being can hear physical sounds, but only the especially blest can hear another kind, the inner music of the Spirit. She said it was just as if God sent an angel to promise her that my ears should catch the inner music."

I could not explain to Tia Marta all that Madre had taught me. I can remember her teaching clearly, for she told me so often in childlike ways that I could understand, but I could not tell Tia Marta very much.

I had stopped working, for I found myself gazing



deep into eyes that seemed other than Tia Marta's, —they were so bright with understanding. Yes, and it was very hard to believe, but there were tears on her wrinkled, weathered cheeks.

"Go on," her lips moved.

"There isn't any more I can tell," I said, "except that I was very little when I lost my hearing and was first unhappy; but I can see her dear face now, her brown hair parted so smoothly, the pallor of her cheeks, the red color of her lips, and most of all, her big brown eyes, all lighted with love, while she talked to me. She was poor, you know, and gave music lessons to eke out the money that my father left her when he died. And she worked very hard that I might have the best teachers for my speech, that it might not be spoiled. But always she taught me herself each day about harmony and love, and sincerity and trust. And since—you see—you see—" I couldn't, couldn't go on. I choked and tried, but my throat had grown tighter and tighter ever since I had begun to picture Madre's face to Tia Marta. (I wish I didn't cry so easily, just like a little child, but I can't seem to help it.) Yet, after all, they weren't discouraged tears. They came from glad thoughts as much as sad. It was as if Tia Marta and I had heard music together at last, and it came so big and tender and surprising to us and I was just so glad, I broke down under it. That's all. People who have cried at concerts would understand how I felt. It was so kind, so true, that music that came from Tia Marta's heart and filled the old kitchen which had often rung with discord.

Tia Marta had never held me when I was little, nor kissed me, nor fixed my hair, but now she patted me very lovingly, saying things I couldn't see for the tears that blinded me, and all the time she was half leading me, half pulling me into her bedroom.

"There, child," she said, "you wash your eyes and then you just run down to the old Higgins place and ask those musicians up here for Thanksgiving dinner, come next week. I guess I'm old enough to protect the house even if they should turn out to be reg'lar Bohemian pickpockets. I'll quiz 'em while they eat and then we'll see. If they are all you think they are, maybe they could teach you some of the book learning you are hankering for. I don't want to spoil anyone's first chance, though someone spoiled mine for me. I reckon one spoiled life is enough in a family of two."

"But your life isn't spoiled, Tia Marta," I cried. "You have made such beautiful music for me today! I'll try always to make some for you."

Oh, it is true that all people hear music if you can only trust long enough to understand each other. I've waited such a long time, six whole years, for Tia Marta's music, and today— If I had been more brave, not so afraid, maybe I would have found it before.

This afternoon I am going down to the old Higgins place to invite my dear friends. It seems so wonderful, when just this morning I was almost in despair,—not quite, for since the whirlwind and the still small voice, I could never again stop listening for the angels' songs.

*November fourteenth*

**I**T IS Thursday night. My quiet life has suddenly become very exciting.

When Tia Marta sent me down to the old Higgins place yesterday, I was like a little girl starting out to invite her friends to a party. For Tia Marta almost never entertains, and when she does it's usually the minister or the Ladies' Aid, and then it isn't like a party at all. But I had made up my mind that this Thanksgiving dinner should be a real party for my dear new friends, and for Tia Marta too.

I fairly ran across the windswept fields, and down the old path through the pines, but when I came out to the road that goes over the dunes I simply had to walk slowly for the wonder of the beautiful picture before me. I've seen the dunes nearly every day since I was ten, but they have never lost their mysterious charm, or seemed ordinary. Our dunes are different from those of the lower Cape; they are covered, excepting for a few sandy patches here and there, with long restless beach grass, with clumps of wild rose and sweet fern and blackberry vine in summer, and, a little later, dotted with indigo bushes in yellow bloom. But it is in the autumn, I think, when one feels their spell most illusively and most buoyantly. Then it is that the silvery grass

turns golden, the cranberry swamps of the inland hollows are dull purple, the bayberry is mauve, and bright leafless horse brier vines massed together make accent notes of grayish green. Against the east, the Cape curves yellow and brown; on the west the brilliant green of the little pitch pines stretches down almost to the cobalt blue of the shining sea, and, over all, the silver and gold and lilac of the sky. The undulating dunes, wild and free, seem always calling me to fly far and high and happy, like the sea gulls wayfaring in the upper air.

Sometimes when I am tempted to feel small and stupid and sad, and humbler than the meanest wizened-up cranberry that Tia Marta ever threw to the pigs, I go to the top of a special little knoll where I can look away off across the tide-changing bay; and my heart feels so full of thankfulness just to be living, that nothing else matters. A wide kind of peace comes into me as if there were a bit of God's handwriting out there that my spirit translated better than my human thought could know.

Yesterday when my heart was singing so joyously, I couldn't hurry on as if the dunes weren't beautiful, nor the swamps, nor the sea, and just as I paused to breathe deeply and feel it all for an instant, I saw the light-haired man come out of the Higgins place, with my dear music friend on his arm. They followed the road that leads between the big twin bluffs to the beach. I began running again, eager to tell my good news. By the time I had overtaken them, they were down on the shore where a new sort of shel-



ter had been built, and where there was a big old-fashioned porch chair and some cushions waiting for the older gentleman. I slowed my pace, not knowing just how to begin my speech. The younger man was too busy with the cushions to notice.

When he did look up, I had almost stopped. I could see easily that he was arranging the blankets and the footrest so that the older gentleman might quietly rest in the sun, and I did not wish to trouble him.

At last, seeing me in the distance, he motioned me to go beyond them a piece, to the point where the big rocks are, making signs that he would join me there. He seemed very important in his manner, as though I were a child of ten or eleven. But I wanted to leave my message, for I didn't know but Tia Marta might change her mind if I put off giving the invitation; so I went to the point and climbed up on my special big rock and waited. I could see the Señor back there at the foot of the road by the shelter, though I had to peer over the rock's edge to do it.

I suppose I was tired from crying and then running, and had relaxed after having been so worked up, trying to tell my intimate affairs to Tia Marta. I was watching a long line of sea gulls on the blue water, and then after I had watched so steadily that the birds looked like white caps, I closed my eyes to rest them. Suddenly I felt frightened, and, jumping up, found the light-haired man sitting up there on the other end of my rock. He was gazing at me with exactly the same look with which he had gazed



at my music friend yesterday when he felt sorry for him. It's very strange, but something in his look reminded me of Madre's gentleness. And yet I can't say I like that man. I usually like everyone, but there's something about him that makes me feel the way Tia Marta looks, all tight and gray. I am afraid I forgot my manners, too.

"What are you doing on my rock?" I said, though I didn't mean to. I was just sleepy.

"I am looking for Spanish birds, *Señorita*," he answered. "Please, will your royal highness permit me to borrow enough of your throne to rest me a little?"

Then I laughed right out. I couldn't help it, for he talked just like a person in a children's fairy tale.

"What did you follow me for?" I asked, so confused I forgot for the instant my important errand.

"Didn't you follow us first?" he said, screwing up his forehead and rumpling his hair, like a little boy. It changed him so when his hair wasn't smooth that I thought maybe he wasn't so old after all. Then just as if he knew my thought he said, with an ownership, grown-up air that annoyed me, "Tell me, *Hopíta*, how old are you"—adding hastily and almost impolitely, "in years, I mean?"

"I'll be seventeen next summer. My name is American. Besides, I should think living with a real Spanish gentleman like the beautiful violinist would teach you better than to spoil people's names. *Señor* *Henríque* called you John Dyer. That's a nice name, but how would you like me to change it by turning it into John Dyeriski?"

"Well," he said, laughing in such a friendly way I was ashamed of my rudeness, "I don't know as I'd mind. You see, I like little girls, and so it doesn't matter what they call me, so long as they let me stay around and be cheered up by their pleasant company."

Then I remembered my errand. "Of course you can stay," I said, "but I must go. I came to invite you both to our house to dinner Thanksgiving Day. Tia Marta sent me with her best regards."

"We surely accept," he answered at once. "You present our compliments to your aunt and tell her we'll be glad to come. Señor Henríque has to live by the sea on account of his health. And sometimes we get very lonely."

"But why do you live in that old, old house?" I asked.

"We probably won't, long," he said. "Just now, it falls in with a special plan of Señor Henríque's."

"I don't see how you could ever be lonely so long as you can always make music together," I told him, looking out over the silver bay and wishing I had his chance, for Señor Henríque had said John Dyer played his accompaniments on the piano, often so forgetting the hour that they played far into the night.

But now his face changed, and he didn't look like a little boy at all, but very old and tired. "That depends," he said. "I don't want to go on playing the piano forever. I want to go out in the world and work. I want to study law. My parents were old friends of Señor Henríque's and when they died in

Cuba, he adopted me as his own son. He sent me to school and college, but after his health failed, I couldn't leave him. He has no family excepting me, so after graduation I stuck with him. He has done so much for me, and still gives me a monthly check, as he did all through college."

"How wonderful," I exclaimed, "to have graduated from college!"

He wasn't teasing in his tone now. He seemed like a real person. I liked him much better.

"Yes," he answered, "Señor Henríque wanted me to major in music, and I did it to please him, but I don't want to go on with that now. So many can play good accompaniments, but I have a special liking for law, and a feeling it's my real business, not music."

I had slidden around on the big rock to watch his lips more closely, and I could see by the way they moved and by the way his keen blue eyes looked straight into mine that he didn't feel I was "just a little girl" any more. He was talking to me as if I were his own age, or even quite a bit older than he.

When Señor Henríque's young man talked to me like this I was very proud and very humble, too. His talking that way made him seem like one who could hear heavenly music. Of course, I didn't think all this clearly then, there on the rock, but I knew it. The tide had gone out now, and the bare sands lay tinted beneath the rose and silver afternoon clouds; all nature was gentle and patient. I'd forgotten that we were almost strangers; I was talking with him as though we were really friends.

"I see," I said, "you are not satisfied to spend your life making piano music. You feel as if helping people with a knowledge of law you would be helping to make a higher kind of harmony. Do you mind telling me how old you are?" I still felt so much older than he that it seemed not at all discourteous to ask him his age, and he was so absorbed he didn't appear to mind, as ten minutes ago, or ten minutes after, I am sure he would have minded.

"Twenty-one," he said sadly. "It's almost too late for me to begin a new profession."

I realized that he was almost old, compared with sixteen, and yet I might be as old as that before I could even begin to really write. And still if I am obliged to wait until I am as old as Tia Marta, I will not feel it is too late. I tried to tell him this and found it was wrong to mention my own age, for then suddenly he made me feel young again. He said things I couldn't understand, though maybe I will after I've studied more.

"You believe in God and angels and prayer, and I am afraid I don't much any more," he said in a very grown-up way, jumping off the rock, for we could see that Señor Henríque had wakened from his nap. He reached up his hand and took hold of the lapel of my sweater. "You do really believe in angels, don't you, honest and truly?" he asked.

I bent down to study his face an instant, to see if he were teasing me, and all in a flash I grew old again and he grew very, very young. Perhaps the wind rumpling his hair so much made him look



so, or my being high up on the rock and he down there on the sand. I don't know how it was, but I found I was looking at him through a mist of tears, and saying, "Yes, John Dyer, I *do*, and you do, too; only you don't know it. You call them ideals." He seemed dazed for a minute. I can see him still gazing up at me as if I were a strange vision instead of a girl in a brown sweater and tramping clothes. A beautiful light broke over his face, and when he started to speak I thought he would say beautiful words, but he didn't,—just a queer phrase I had never heard before and, besides, it ended with that horrid made-up name.

"I guess I get you, Hopita," was what he answered. Yet he was very, very gentle when he tried to help me down from the rock, only it was as if I were a little girl again. I gave up hoping he would remember I am going on seventeen, and I said, "I'll race you from here to the shelter." And I did, and I beat him by just a few feet. He was fair and didn't "go easy" just because I am a girl.

We came up to Señor Henríque all breathless, so that John Dyer made a funny sort of speech out of Tia Marta's invitation. But Señor Henríque was very glad. He seemed so joyous because I had come again that I begged John Dyer to carry the cushions and blankets ahead of us and let me walk with my dear friend up to his little house. When John Dyer saw how happy Señor Henríque's face was at my suggestion, he consented. Oh, it was a proud moment for me. My heart was pounding with joy as the dear gentleman took my arm, and leaned on it



very gently. John Dyer called back from the bluff that he wished he were an artist to paint the picture and Señor Henríque told me what he said.

"The most beautiful musician in all the world and the brownest little Spanish girl you ever imagined. She is tanned by the ocean fogs and winds. His hair is as white as the sea foam, and falling softly to his shoulders, but hers is black and short, curling all over her head like a boy's. In front of them are yellow bluffs and golden dunes; behind is the low-tide bay, where rocks are streaming with liverwort and other seaweeds, where clumps of eelgrass wave and little purple pools reflect the clouds. Over all, is the Cape Cod autumn sky, not just an ordinary blue sky, but one that is streaked with gold and lilac and pink, though it's a long time yet before sunset."

I liked John Dyer's picture. It made me think of him quite differently when I realized how he loved our Cape, even so soon. As we reached the doorway of the old Higgins place he begged me to go in, but I dared not. I had already been out my two hours, and I knew Tia Marta would miss me.

So, taken all in all, yesterday was very big with excitement and very different from the days when I wandered all alone over the dunes with no one to speak to me, my heart full of sad songs mixed with the glad beauty all around. John Dyer reminded me of Nature's lesson today. When I learned for the first time that people could really make earth music and hear no heavenly strains, I realized what a little part the outer ear has, after all. If one hears with the

inner ear, one has real music, whether one hears with the outer ear or not; but if one hears only with the outer ear, there is no real melody, only the shells of sound which bring no wonder-thrill. And once more I was very thankful for the angels and all that Madre had taught me.

*December twenty-fifth*

CHRISTMAS morning! And a Christmas landscape! Cape Cod certainly has the most surprising weather. The days have been so warm we have scarcely needed a fire, except in the old Franklin stove, evenings, and now—well, it's just as if Nature had been painting the earth and had grown as frivolous as I used to be with my water colors. First, in springtime, she put in delicate washes of light blue and dainty green; and then she tried bright yellow butter-cups and pink roses, and afterward, purple asters and brilliant goldenrods,—more and more color until the crimson oaks and scarlet woodbine made all the picture gaudy. And finally, as if she felt she had laid on the color too thick, whiff!—she suddenly washed it all out with soaking rains and gave us a clean sheet again, an earth with no color but white. We rarely have enough snow for sleighing, but for three days the roads have been covered, and this morning, when John Dyer brought Señor Henríque up for dinner, he came in a sleigh with real bells that jingled. (Tia Marta told me how merry they sounded.) He had walked up to Eldridge Corners to get the horse and sleigh.

Tia Marta heard the Christmasy sounds 'way down the road, and her face showed how they

pleased her. "Come, Hope," she said, almost gaily. "We must meet them at the door."

For since that Thanksgiving dinner, when she fed them to her heart's content, and Señor Henríque played for her and talked to her a long time alone, Tia Marta has approved of my music-friend, and has consented to let me go to the old house for two hours each day to read with him. And she likes his companion, John Dyer, too. I call him the frosty-hearted man because I've decided that he doesn't believe anything exists at all if you can't dissect it and give each part a Latin name. I am afraid we quarrel a little sometimes, though. I guess Browning must have known folks just like John Dyer and me when he said, "The rest may reason and welcome; 'tis we musicians know."

Still, John Dyer's reasoning is good for my thinking, and it's like a game sometimes, it's such fun; but it never seems to make him very happy. He always looks so cool and collected. Tia Marta is very good, and gives me all the time she can away from housework to study. Of course, my going to college is still a long way off, but Señor Henríque is thinking up a plan and so is Tia Marta. I can't feel discouraged, because it's Christmas Day and all the world ought to be very, very glad. This has been such a beautiful Christmas I wish I could put every flying minute of it down in my dear book.

We got up early and scoured the house so it just shone. Especially the big kitchen was lovely, with its good smells coming from the roasting chicken, and the stove and windows glistening. The dining

room had never looked so cozy. (It's really our living-room, only when we have company we set our table there.) The brass of the andirons in the old fireplace, with big crackling logs burning in it, and the silver on the table were as bright as Tia Marta's "elbow grease" could make them. She had put on her best black silk dress and I had on my red wool that I love. It's such a happy color and belongs the most to Christmas. Besides, it's longer than my everyday skirts. We had made little bouquets of partridge berry and ground pine for each place, and I had hemstitched a handkerchief for Señor Henríque and made a doughnut man for John Dyer. We hid these by their plates.

Tia Marta and I had given each other our gifts at breakfast. I made a lace collar for her, and painted a little picture of the dunes. But she had a bought present for me, a beautiful book of poetry. I love it, next to the little Bible that my father had, with its gold clasp. Every night that sleeps under my pillow,—and now you, too, dear book.

Well, when Tia Marta heard the sleigh bells, we both went to the kitchen door and helped Señor Henríque into the house.

"Ah," he said, "this fragrance is very poetical. It makes me think of carols and Christmas trees and Santa Claus." He spoke so merrily we all laughed, and then there was a real Christmas feeling in the house, the kind I've always read about in books but never really met before. Our hearts rang little chimes like the silvery bells, and after we had seated Señor Henríque in a big chair near the open fire,



and Tia Marta had opened the oven door to baste the fowl, John Dyer said, "I've engaged the sleigh for the day, Mrs. Freeman. I thought you and Hope could take turns and get in a bit of Christmas sleighing."

"It's mighty nice of you, John Dyer," answered Tia Marta, "but I am tied, so to speak, to these roosters in the oven for the next hour. I'll tell you what, take Hope for a little sprint while Mr. Henríque and I tend the fire as grownups should. Only, I'd suggest you wait till after dinner, unless you need something to give an edge to your appetite."

"Not much, we don't, do we, Señorita Hopíta," he laughed, using the horrid made-up name he calls Spanish, in spite of my dislike for it. "Only, today," he added, "you should be called 'Señorita Hope-eat-'em' in honor of the roosters now cuddling so cozily in the oven."

I never do know what to say to John Dyer's calm nonsense. I wish I did. I get so disturbed I can't seem to hear music with him at all. He says things that seem so rude, but he laughs when I tell him so, and claims it doesn't matter so long as he can hear my music. He is very kind to Señor Henríque, so I must be patient and kind to him. I remember, too, that I was very impolite to him that day last fall when we had our first talk alone, out on the big rock.

After deciding upon Tia Marta's plan to postpone the sleigh ride, he seemed funnier than ever, for he put on one of her long white aprons and pretended

he had been commissioned to count off all the different things we had put on the table. He checked all those, then he checked all the things on the dresser top and had begun on the mantel shelf articles, when he said suddenly, puckering his forehead in a way that always makes me laugh in spite of myself, "There, I guess that's all, excepting the brown bird of a child they call—" but I had stopped watching him and started for the kitchen to escape his nonsense. He caught my arm and held me off as you would a picture, saying coolly— Well, I'm not going to repeat the silly things he said. I shan't disgrace this dear book with them, though I was glad they made Señor Henríque smile. He seems so much happier lately. Ever since Thanksgiving he has had a different look.

After a while the dinner was ready to serve, and in spite of John Dyer's fooling around we finally did get it onto the table while Tia Marta gave the finishing touches to the roosters, trimming them up with parsley and celery and cranberry sauce.

After we were seated, we seemed to be waiting for something. Tia Marta looked at Señor Henríque, but he didn't say anything, and then she looked at John Dyer. I almost gasped when he bowed his head and said a sort of blessing. It was kind of low and very short. But somehow his doing that to make Tia Marta happy made me like him a little more. He had always seemed so—so sort of irreverent, and he had said he didn't believe in prayer or the angels, but his saying that blessing gave me a different

thought of him. I know he does believe, now. He just thinks he doesn't, or, maybe, he is afraid he doesn't.

After that everybody seemed warmed up and jolly. It was the merriest time I can remember, and Señor Henríque was merry too. He asked conundrums and cracked jokes. John Dyer teased, and Tia Marta kept urging us to eat long after we really couldn't eat any more.

Yes, truly there was merry Christmas music in all our hearts this noon. There wasn't a single jarring note. Tia Marta was just like a real person; even her pug looked different. They loved their presents, too; Señor Henríque liked his handkerchief, especially after I told him I had made it for him, myself.

Dinner over, we did dishes together; at least, John Dyer pretended to help, though he was much more bother than he was help, rinsing dishes I had just wiped and putting the silver and the tinwear in the same tray!

After the food was set away, Tia Marta left us to finish up, while she talked with Señor Henríque. He fitted into our house, and yet he didn't,—sitting by the open fire, the dim light falling on his snowy hair, his delicate hands resting on the shabby old arms of Tia Marta's chair. He seemed to hint of another land, some foreign castle of my dreams, of lace and velvets, faint perfumes and glowing wines. I could almost fancy that his dreamy eyes gazing out over the snow covered enclosure of our midyard might behold far-off lands of tinkling fountains and troubadours with tambourines, and dainty languor-

ous dark-eyed maidens with lace mantillas and sandal-scented fans. As I stood beside him later in the day, my hand on his shoulder, trying to see what his memory was painting, he asked me my thought.

"Castles in Spain," I answered, "with a cold New England background." Then suddenly, I felt so disloyal to our own dear Cape that I added hastily, "Only, Nature made the Cape like a whimsical child, and we love her in spite of her unexpected moods. Maybe tomorrow we shall find the snow gone, the daffies budding, and the robins out." (We've even seen pansies at Christmas, and one year I picked a dandelion on New Year's.)

But he didn't seem to hear my defense. He turned toward me and kept moving his lips as if in a whisper, saying "Castles in Spain, castles in Spain." Then he roused himself and called very briskly, "John Dyer, John Dyer, you better hurry the brown bird into my fur coat and out for her sleigh ride, or the sun will have set." Then, turning to me, he added, "I want to talk with your aunt, child. Please bring my fiddle before you leave. It's with my coat."

Still he held my hand, and then his sensitive fingers touched and caressed my hair as softly and delicately as a butterfly. I think I can never quite forget the strange far-off echo I heard in my spirit, at the touch of his fingers,—as if I were a flower, and he the sunshine on my petals.

When John Dyer came in with the great fur coat and Tia Marta with her old-fashioned small mink muff, the fanciful mood had faded and I was an ordinary girl again, laughing out from the depths of

a coat twice my size, just foolishly, gaily, and really frivolously, for the first time in all my sixteen years. At last, I was to know the music of merry sleigh bells, rung out across the Christmas snow.



*December twenty-fifth (continued)*

PEOPLE who live in other parts of the country can scarcely realize the thrill with which I found our sleigh flying over the snow. The gay tingle of my cheeks as the wind struck them; the late sunshine making the snow all pink and gold; and best of all, the Christmas music I could hear at last with John Dyer. As I watched the little bells on the shafts go jingling up and down, I fancied that silvery music could be as nothing to the song my inner ears could hear; and after a time when he asked me my thoughts, I tried to tell him.

"Is it that which makes your cheeks so pink and your eyes so bright?" he asked, touching the horse lightly with the whip so she threw up her heels and plunged the sleigh forward, dashing snow in our faces as we slid faster and faster up the old station road.

"Maybe," I said. "You look a little more jolly than usual, yourself." We have come to know Señor Henríque's John so well, we are very homely with him sometimes. Besides, when you are dashing up hill and down on runners behind a strange horse, you don't mind so much if people who aren't very old themselves seem to think you are nothing but a little girl. At least, I found it so this afternoon.

"That's my Christmas present to you, I guess, Brown Bird," he said, so solemnly.

"What?" I asked, almost scared.

"Being more cheerful," he said. "I've—well, I've decided that you are right about some things, and that maybe angels are real, after all. Anyhow, I am trying to hear what you call 'inner music' with Señor Henríque, and he seems like a different person. You see, I couldn't make a doughnut man for you, so I tried the listening act instead." His words were sort of joking-like, but I was so happy I almost cried. The bright, Christmasy day, Tia Marta's good cheer, my dear old friend's happy face (for since Thanksgiving we have seen so much of him he seems like someone loved since childhood, and I think Tia Marta feels so too), and now John Dyer, whose cold ways really have almost made me sad sometimes, because I could never listen to angel music with him as I do with other people—now John Dyer was hearing real music, too.

Tia and I drive with Ezekial Snow in his buckboard when we need to make long trips across the Cape to buy clothes or other important things. Very few people have sleighs here because we have rainy weather so often in winter, when other places in New England have snow. When we do have snow, it soon melts because of the salty breezes from the ocean. Ezekial says that the government will some day put through a canal at Buzzard's Bay, where the land is very narrow. Then the Cape will be a real island, with, I suppose, an island climate. However, a few people do have sleighs and some people

rent them to others. Nearly all the horses which usually pull buggies or carryalls can pull sleighs, occasionally, if we have snow enough.

As we sped along in the dazzling whiteness, tall golden-brown grasses waved above the snow on either side of the narrow road, and the bright green pines added color to the landscape; their branches held little heaps of white like small irregular Christmas parcels, and bare live-green horse brier vines decorated and brightened the stone walls where the brilliant maroon of sumac berries still clung to the low, angular bushes. Beyond the tangle of green and brown and russet by the walls, the brilliant orange-red berries of the brook alders made patches of flame near the swampy places, and here and there on the low hillsides small black-green cedar Christmas trees stood straight and tall in contrast to our gnarled and twisted Japanese-like little pitch pines. The dry leaves of the oak trees were still rosy, and the cranberry bogs, though some were flooded like snow-encrusted lakes, mostly showed purple and mahogany and wine color between patches of white, and seemed like rich, oriental rugs scattered over the snow.

When we drove into the yard again, after our lovely, lovely ride, John Dyer put the horse under the shed roof between the house and our old barn, and we stole in through the kitchen. We had seen by the soft light falling through the dining room windows out on the snow that Tia hadn't yet brought in the lamp, but that she and our dear guest were sitting in the glow of the dining room fire,

When I came where I could look into the room and see them, I could scarcely believe my eyes. The plain furniture of the old-fashioned room seemed beautiful and fine in the firelight; the tall candle sticks on the dresser were reflected in the mirror above; and even the queer old blue teapot that Uncle Joshua brought from China and the long dried grass in the blue vase had taken on a kind of delicate elegance.

Señor Henríque was talking, absently fingering the fiddle that lay across his knees. His face was wondrously tender in the flickering light. But Tia Marta—it was because of Tia Marta that I was so astonished. She sat all in a heap in her low rocker, her head in her hands, and her face hidden. I couldn't wait to let them know I had come. I rushed right in and threw my arms around her in the way I have always wanted to hug her. She was crumpled and damp and little (I never knew before that she was so little) and she didn't draw away from me at all. She just looked up at Señor Henríque sort of meek and scared.

"What shall I tell her?" she said, brokenly, lifting her head and speaking to Señor Henríque.

I was frightened. I felt as if something dreadful had happened. John Dyer came in, and, standing beside me, caught my look of fear. "What is it, Señor?" he asked.

"Dear Hope," our friend answered quietly, "there's nothing to be worried about. I played for your aunt. I played, and then I talked with her and, —well, she told me a story of her childhood, which,



put together with my conversation, and certain facts I confided to her, overcame her feelings."

Finally, after he had paused, Tia Marta said, "I had held down all my feelings for over forty years, so when I gave way it was hard." She was sitting straighter now, but as I knelt on the floor she still kept her arm around me. (No one has ever been loving to me since Madre went, not loving with their arms.) Then she spoke, and I watched her lips moving in the dim light.

"Long years ago when I was a girl I too wanted to be a musician. I wanted to play the fiddle, wanted it more than anything in the world. I saved money all through my teens and when I was twenty I bought one, but—" Tia Marta's words paused an instant, then she continued, "but my father thought it made me waste time and set me against the man he wanted me to marry. And so he *broke* it!"

"Broke it?" we cried, John Dyer and I. "Broke it?" Señor Henríque's face showed pale in the firelight. "Broke a violin!"

"Yes," went on Tia Marta, "and turned my heart by his act into stone. I married your uncle, child, but I grew harder and more bitter each year, and when you came with your prattle of music, it set me worse. I felt as if you were bound to be disappointed even more than I was."

"If I had only known," I said, putting her hand to my cheek.

"I wouldn't tell—I couldn't—but when—when Mr. Henríque played, I couldn't help mentioning it



to him. And then we talked and his talk made me cry again."

"But now she is never going to lack for music," said Señor Henríque, "for I have persuaded her to take this feeble old musician to board in her home. You shall make music for her soul, Hope, and I for her ear." Then he sat up very straight and said, "John Dyer, John Dyer, you may go to law school tomorrow. Mrs. Freeman will be well paid for her trouble, but you know, as only those who have tried to do it can know, no money can pay for the act of being day-by-day strength for another. You have been a dear good boy, John, and I shall miss you sorely, but you must answer the call of your mission, even as little Hope here is trying to answer the call of hers."

I cannot remember how it happened, but somehow we got through shaking hands and saying good-night, and finally Tia Marta and I were left alone. I am writing up here in the cold of my chamber. I could not sleep until I had tried to write this down. It does seem so strange and puzzling. I was too excited to catch all they said, and the room was too dark. But though I could not hear the words the others did, I heard the soft strains that echoed through the dim old house, stealing in and out as a warm, scented breeze, making a beautiful chord wherein all hearts responded like one great note.

O, dear angels, dear angels! Even though you might be just the brave, bright thoughts that John Dyer thinks, you are full of power and beauty, and your song has made me keep my promise; you are

teaching me to sing with you, as Madre said you would.

The still voice said, that day in the storm, "Live lovingly, Hope. Sing back bravely and truly. Kindness is all around you, if you will only listen for it." And tonight I knew again, so surely, that the Voice was true. It is wonderful to think that a real musician is coming to live with us. This house doesn't seem sad or lonely or dull any more. This house seems like the little blazing star flower I found last fall. It seems to have been taken into the gentle warmth of heaven, the way the little flower was taken into our kitchen that night, out of the chill November twilight.

*February first*

**Y**OU would never know that this was Tia Marta's house. The best parlor bedroom has been repapered, and the front door has been opened and really used for the first time since Uncle Joshua died a long while ago. The parlor is beautiful; the early sun streams in at the southern windows and the later sun in at the western, so that all day it is bright. The fireplace covering has been removed and big logs are kept burning, for Señor Henríque is using the parlor for his private study.

Tia Marta has Ezekial Snow bring in wood for her now, and water too, and he helps around a lot, so the housework is easier than it was, and, joy of joys, I take my dear friend walking and I read to him every day.

John Dyer goes tomorrow. I am afraid his friend will miss him dreadfully; they have been together so long. He took him with him back to Spain several times, and to France and Italy. They have lived alone together, too, which must make them feel part of each other, the way Tia Marta and I do, though we have never expressed that feeling.

John Dyer is very quiet. He says he never would have had the courage to tell the Señor if I had not talked so plainly to him. I think that was very nice in John to let me think I had helped a little. We

like folks to say we help even when we could do nothing very much at all; that is, if we very much wish we could help, but really don't know how.

Señor Henríque had me send for the college preparatory English reading list, so when I read to him it could be from among those books. That's very unselfish, for I know he likes Spanish and French books best. He is teaching me French and I find it quite easy. He says I am doing very well in my Latin for one who has had no teacher. But I corrected him there, for Nature has taught me more than I could make him understand. It's very hard to work day after day at something you don't quite comprehend when there's no one to explain it to you. But often when I've been nearly desperate over a passage in Latin, I've gone outdoors and Nature has said, "You must learn patience, Hope; it's *my* favorite study. I have specialized in that now for thousands and thousands of years." And then I would come back and try again. Mathematics is easier for me; that is, I can always understand if I keep at a problem long enough. I've read most of the history books in the village library.

It's almost spring and I am so thankful. When I look back over the winter, I am very happy, for ever since I found you, dear book, I have remembered my promise to Madre. After the still voice spoke, and I found you, everything changed. "Singing issued hence," as my poetry book says, and "harmony is prized," though the full song will never be quite reached until I have kept my word and written the book I promised Madre I would write. I will be

patient and work hard and keep on listening to  
the angels.

"I fear no more. The clouded face  
Of Nature smiles; through all her things  
Of time and space and sense I trace  
The moving of the Spirit's wings."



*February second*

JOHN DYER has gone. He has been on the Cape such a little while, it seems strange that he should have come to be part of everything all around me the way he has. I suppose it's because we took so many long tramps together, talking about books and music and nature and God, yes, and of the angels, for, after all, I think John Dyer understands about the angels, for he said the other day, "Every high thought is really an angel to beckon us on and help us up." He understands, too, about my hearing sounds that outer ears can't hear, notes of trust and courage and good will. He has to have everything translated, as it were, into terms of logic. I suppose true logic is only a kind of music, after all, real music; but he listens when I try to explain, and once, when Tia Marta and the minister argued so excitedly and John Dyer realized how the discord disturbed me, he looked up and said with his eyes, "I know now what you mean." Another time, when Tia Marta scolded Ezekial Snow for tracking her wet floor when he couldn't get the wood into the house at that minute any other way, and it seemed as if my heart would burst, Señor Henríque stood in the doorway, and the confusion stopped quickly and Tia Marta's face got red, and Ezekial muttered "Bless my shoe leather," and looked sorry.

John Dyer had heard it all. I had seen it, too.

"The third note produced a harmonious discord," John said. We had been reading Browning's "Abt Vogler" with Señor Henríque the evening before.

John's saying that shows how music and poetry have the same laws, and mean the very same thing after all; only each has a language of its own, as different and yet as similar as Spanish and English. In Spanish we have two names for the ear. The inside ear we call *oído* and the outside *oreja*. I am sorry we don't in English, for it really seems as if we have two kinds of hearing in English, or any other language. Maybe if more people didn't have the outer hearing, the inner hearing would develop. I don't know. John Dyer says that ages ago our species had long, pointed, movable ears, then as intelligence increased, we used the ear so much less that gradually it became more as it is now. Maybe if some of us learn more of the inner hearing of the spirit, by and by people won't need the outer ear at all. Anyway, what might have been an affliction for me has been a blessing; only it wouldn't have been if the angels had not helped me, held me up when I was nearly falling and was almost ready to stop trying.

It's very nice to have the house so sunny and shining and Christmasy all the time, but I wish we could be all together always, the four of us, as we have been so much of late.

This afternoon when I came in from my walk, I found Señor Henríque playing his violin while Tia Marta sat near with her sewing. I do believe her face is changing. There is a little reflection of Señor Hen-

rique's own light in it, something of that same bright, peaceful look. I stood watching them. By and by she let her sewing lie in her lap, and her eyes looked out at the sunset. I think our dear Señor was playing her favorite Intermezzo from "Cavalleria Rusticana." It always seems to cast a spell over Tia Marta. Señor Henríque has told me the story of the opera: how that special part comes after the storm and stress of the first scene.

As I looked at Tia's wrinkled, weathered face, and her work-toughened hands, and her gray eyes (so much more beautiful than I used to think, because they don't look so steely any more), I realized anew the mysterious power of music, something that only touches us through the air. Had it not opened for her the inner ear? As Señor Henríque played, a strange sweet joy swept through me in unison with the song my outer ear doesn't catch,—or, as John Dyer still seems to believe, in sympathy with the thought and feeling of one who is playing. A big, slow prayer surged up from my heart that God would help me to see and hear more clearly the true spiritual universe of harmony around us all. And then I left the two of them, and came up here to you, little book, because since John Dyer has gone and we cannot walk and talk and settle together all the pros and cons of the world, I must talk to you as if you were a human friend as he is, different from Tia Marta, yes, and different, too, from my beloved Señor Henríque. These are two dear loves of my life, my own blessed people whom I wait on and think for, and live for. Though they are so much older

than I, and so much wiser, they often seem like two beautiful children to love and care for.

Last night they declared I was tired and must go to bed, though John Dyer and I did want to walk a little in the wind and rain. But they feared I would catch cold, and nothing but I must leave them, all three sitting so cozily beneath the lamp, while I poked upstairs to bed. But then, ah me, what can one expect when one loves one's folks so much one would rather spoil them than not? It was sheer selfishness that made me give in to their whim and say goodbye to John down there in the dining room, instead of out in the mist on our winding road. Anyway it served him right, for he had called me *Señorita Hopita* seven times. I counted, and gave him a bad mark for each spoiling of my name.

## *March first*

I AM so worried that I fear if it weren't for this little book, I would do some foolish, frightened, ill-poised thing. I am so thankful I can write it all out.

Early this morning the front door knocker sounded. We were sitting at the breakfast table, when I saw Tia Marta's face suddenly grow pale, and Señor Henríque lift his head to listen, startled and alert.

I felt the jar, but didn't recognize the knocking 'till Tia Marta went to the door. She came back almost whiter than the tablecloth and said, "It's for you, Mr. Henríque," holding out a yellow envelope as she spoke. We had never had a telegram come to our house before, and we couldn't help feeling frightened. I was amazed and troubled, too, when, after he had read the telegram, Señor Henríque said, without further explanation, "I must go to Boston, Mrs. Freeman." I don't know why I should have felt so disturbed.

"Is John Dyer hurt, or ill," I thought, "and they don't want me to know?" Oh, why, why didn't they explain? Or had they said something my eyes had failed to note? But I did not like to ask. Tia Marta's face was very grave, and her manner subdued. Still, as she did not mention the telegram, I couldn't ask



her the question I wanted so much to ask. All day the house has felt queer, and Señor Henríque has spoken dreamily as if his spirit were back in Spain. I wish I could bring myself to ask what the telegram said.

Tonight Tia Marta came up into my room at bedtime, just as I was getting out my pen and ink to write, and said, "Tomorrow, Hope, Mr. Henríque has to go to Boston, and wants us to go with him."

"Both of us?" I cried, more alarmed than ever.

"Yes," she answered. "I haven't been to the city for thirty-five years, when I went on my wedding trip, and you only came through Boston on your way from California when you were ten, but I imagine we can get him there safely between us."

"Of course," I replied. "Is—" but I couldn't go on. What they wouldn't tell me of themselves I could not ask about, though my hands were icy and my head was hot. "When will we go?" I questioned. I seemed to be someone not Hope Freeman saying the words, someone I had never known or felt like.

"In the morning on the early train," she told me, and then I asked her if there was anything I could do to help get ready. "No, I think not," she answered. "Mr. Henríque is already packed. I sent Ezekial up for your mother's valise you brought your things in when you came; and I shall take Captain Freeman's traveling bag. It's a little out of style, but perfectly good."

Then I asked her what I should wear, and she said, "You better wear your red wool. It's the only

dress you have that's long enough. Put your night things in."

"Won't we come home at night?"

"Probably not. It would be too hard a day for Mr. Henriqué."

"But is—" again I started to question her, and again I could not.

"You better wear your black coat," she went on, "and your best black hat. I am glad your gloves and boots are new."

It wouldn't have mattered to me just then if she had told me to wear her old gray shawl and sun-bonnet! There was such a storm inside of me that I said, "All right, Tia Marta, I will do all you say. But I am going to put on my waterproof first and take a little walk." I said it in a way she never disputes; at least, she never has since Señor Henriqué came to live with us.

"All right, but don't stay long. I can see by your face you need the air," she answered.

I promised to come back very soon and ran down for my coat softly so Señor Henriqué wouldn't hear me. I closed the door very quietly and crept out into the mist.

It seemed then as if someone had really said, "John Dyer is hurt or ill—or—worse" . . . After I had walked and walked with the cool wet night wind in my face, all sweet with the hint of arbutus and swelling willow buds, my heart grew steadier. Where was my music? Nothing ever really can happen wrong. The real inner world is God's world, and

the angels never leave us. They are always singing if we will only listen and hear. God can't make discords. John is His child, too, just as much as I am. I was glad, oh so glad now, I had let John take Madre's little Bible. It was old and worn and I had felt sorry I could not buy him a new one, in English, though he loves Spanish and reads it almost as well as English. Maybe if he is in trouble it will help him.

Nature was my teacher again this evening. Out of the night winds I seemed to hear a voice, "Harmony is still here. The angels are saying that you must be brave and steady, and not let in chaos and fear."

So I have come home and packed my mother's old valise. By tomorrow night I shall know. "Sorrow is hard to bear, and doubt is slow to clear," but "God has a few of us he whispers in the ear" as the poetry I have been reading today, says. And now I shall kneel down by the window and make my heart very, very quiet, that I may catch His deepest, stillest promise, the one that no one ever puts into words, not even my dear little Bible. And then I shall go to sleep.

### *March second*

**H**OW can I ever write it all out in an orderly way? It seems as if I hadn't self control enough to do it. But I shall try. I must. Madre would be disappointed in me if I described this great event of my life in a jumbled way.

First we got up very, very early, while it was still dark, and had breakfast by lamp light. Nobody talked. Tia Marta and I were too excited. El Señor, as John Dyer and I call our dear friend, was too much absorbed in his own thoughts.

Ezekial Snow drove us to the station. It seemed strange to be all dressed up in our best, riding out at dawn. At any other time that ride would have been wonderful, but, try as I would, I couldn't throw off the feeling that they had something on their minds that they were not ready to tell me. Even the thrill of going on the train wasn't quite fully enjoyed.

It was a long and disturbing journey. At the last minute Tia Marta had insisted upon bringing three umbrellas, three pairs of rubbers and three water-proofs. Neither of us could help her much because Señor Henríque had his violin and his suitcase and I had my bag and Tia Marta's. But everybody was very good to us, and when I tried to make the faucet work to fill El Señor's little silver traveling cup with

drinking water, two gentlemen helped me, and one carried the cup down the aisle to Tia Marta, who cautioned me about speaking to strangers. The gentleman didn't seem to mind her saying that in front of him. He just smiled and lifted his hat and went away.

After a while Tia Marta settled herself in another seat for a nap. She had worked late into the night to get the house ready to leave and really needed a rest. El Señor and I sat opposite each other in seats by ourselves. His eyes were closed but I thought he was awake, just the same. I tried to look out the window, but a great cloud seemed to shut out the sunshine. What secret were they keeping from me? Why had they not shared the telegram or told me about what it said?

Suddenly I realized El Señor was studying my face, tenderly and, it seemed to me, sadly, but perhaps only inquiringly. After a few moments, he said, moving his lips softly, "Hope, little Hope."

"Yes, Señor," I answered, with a quick flutter of feeling. Perhaps now he would explain everything. And I prayed that he would not speak some dreadful news.

"What would you say if I told you that I have actual proof that you are my very own granddaughter?" he asked.

"O Señor!" I cried out, forgetting that we were in the train, surrounded by strangers.

"Yes, dear one, it is true. I came to the Cape because the lawyers who were searching for your



mother found she had died in California and left a child who had been sent to Cape Cod, and there was a strong possibility that you were that child. When I told Mrs. Freeman my story last fall, she helped me to find the only missing facts, and now I have but to substantiate certain photographs and letters which have been found recently in California."

I was so amazed I could not speak. Of course I was glad, oh so very, very glad, both for El Señor and for me; but I had expected some word of John Dyer. I was very happy, but I longed so much to ask about the telegram. And then, beginning to realize more fully what this great news meant to us both and seeing the longing in El Señor's face, I slipped from my seat opposite and put my hand in his and rested my head against his shoulder. This was my own grandfather, my dear mother's father.

Softly rising, like the faintest far-away music, I heard his love begin to sing. The music rose quietly, gently, in stately measures, until it throbbed sweetly through all the train. It came to me how this togetherness was the fulfillment of his deep father-hopes to see his daughter once more and to forgive her. He had found her in me and was content. The music was not triumphant or strenuous. It was steady and clear and sustained, full of tranquil joy. I think it must have wakened Tia Marta, because shortly she roused herself and came over to us.

As she sat down, El Señor began, "Mrs. Freeman—"

"Yes," she replied in her matter-of-fact way, "I have caught my breath at last and am a new woman."

"Mrs. Freeman," he began again, "I felt that the time had come to tell Hope about our relationship."

"Yes, Mr. Henríque, I am glad." Tia Marta was very solemn now.

"It is wonderful!" I whispered. Then it came to me that I belonged to them both, and I reached over and took Tia's hand, so that I could let her know I was sure of her loving me too. She smiled so brightly she put a new note in the music all around us—a note of clear blue sky-music, like a break in the soft gray clouds. "We will all live together always," I said, a little tremblingly. "How very, very wonderful!"

"Until you go to college," Tia answered firmly. "You may be ready to go by fall, and—"

"But there will be long vacations," I interrupted.

And still no mention of John Dyer. Oh why, why would they not tell me? Had El Señor shared his secret sooner than he had planned, to steady my heart for bad news? Why did I keep thinking about bad news? Was there a very bright mountain of joy in my inner world and was this dread thought only its shadow thrown upon the ground before my feet? It must be so. I couldn't be afraid, because I was sure that the angels were holding us all up safely in their loving care.

The train drew into the station shed. Passengers stood up. Tia began to collect her bundles. El Señor (he says I must call him "*Abuelo*"—Grandfather—

now) held his violin in one hand and his suitcase in the other, while I carried my bag and took his arm. I was so excited I could scarcely breathe. Lots of people were helping Tia Marta with her bundles and bag and umbrellas, and someone took my valise. In the confusion El Señor really helped me more than I helped him. My eyes were so blurred with tension I could scarcely discern anything as we got off in the big station shed with all the tracks and trains. Then in the sea of faces among the people waiting on the platform I saw one that made me cry out. The face was wavery, my heart beat so. John Dyer was smiling and well and safe. Before I knew what I was doing, Señor Henríque was left standing alone. My arms were around John Dyer, and I was crying against his shoulder.

When I realized what I was doing, and looked up, Señor Henríque was giving directions to a uniformed man, and Tia Marta was counting the baggage, pretending I hadn't disgraced myself at all. John took out his big handkerchief and wiped my eyes. I told him I had thought he was ill; that the telegram had come and I couldn't ask them what was in it, and—and—and . . . John didn't speak one word; he did not even motion a sign. He sent a quick wonder-look up into the gray, smoky dome. The look was like the signal of a music leader. Suddenly a thousand exquisite chords crashed through the air, down from the arches and balconies of the station shed, and flooded all the place. I just stood still, athrob with the burst of music coming from above.

There were some gray doves flying among the arches of the roof and they seemed to be joining in the song, but I am sure no one else heard them—unless maybe John did. Yes, he was listening, too. His face was very white with brightness, and as I looked at him, suddenly the surging music changed. It grew slow and low and solemn, like a prayer. I shut my eyes a moment to let my breath come back, and I seemed to see the face of La Madre again and to feel her lips against my cheek whispering "*Escucha! Los ángeles te cantan.*" And yet, when I opened my eyes I knew it was John who had kissed me so softly, and then,—how can I ever explain what happened? Out of all the music filling the air, a wondrous light began to shine. The glory grew and grew, filling all space. And then—yes, it was really true—my outer ear and my inner ear were one. As the burst of light faded, I was hearing John's voice. It was his human voice, saying so plainly, "Your angels are with us, dear Hope."

"I can *hear*," I almost shouted. "I can *hear*! Just as I did when I was little! I remember now!" Then El Señor came nearer and put his arm around me, and John took one hand and Tia Marta came and took the other.

"Can you really hear, child?" gasped Tia. "Don't you need to watch my lips? Are you *sure*? You are not imagining this?"

"No, no," I sobbed, "I can hear your voice." And I did—just as plainly; yes, and the roar and puff of the trains and other sounds. But there was no distressing confusion, only harmony as though heaven

and earth were really one, for, at last, I know now, for always, there is only one ear that really hears, not two, the way I had thought. Just as, after all, there is only one Harmony expressing itself differently in the music of each of our lives.



*March tenth*

GOODBYE, dear book; my precious grandfather wants me to give you to him. He says he lost you one day in the autumn and that the wind carried you into my little cave. Last week, coming home on the train, after Grandfather had attended to all the business about my being legally recognized as his own daughter's child, he explained many things to me. He told me how he had come to our part of the Cape just to find me, and I told him all about the day I found you, dear book, and how I loved the poem he had penned on your flyleaf. He says the verses were written by a New England poet whom he loves, and so he had copied them both in Spanish and in English. We told so many sacred things to each other that morning, and we have had some wonderful long talks since we came back to Tia Marta's.

Grandfather has read all that I have written on your pages, and he says that some day the story of this important year in my life may be printed in a little book. He says that finding out how the angels took care of me brought comfort to him and that others may like to read about it, too.

The hearing that came back to me last week in the train shed has not left me. For now it is as

though I had always had it, just as I did before when I was a little child.

Going up on the train, it seemed so real to me that Grandfather and Tia were keeping back some dreadful news about John. Then after listening, I knew that the angels were with him, and *everyone*. Soon, Grandfather told me his wonderful news. I have learned that it is always our fear and worry that keep us from hearing the angels' singing and the heavenly harmony all around us.

I used to think that John isn't a musician. I know now that he is, only he interprets the inner music differently, something as the flute and the violin play the same notes, one with breath and one with strings, yet expressing the same melody.

John is studying at Harvard to be a lawyer. I am going to Radcliffe when I am prepared, to study to be a writer. It's wonderful to be learning to hear the same song. John said—but we promised each other not to tell anyone yet. It's our own dear secret, so I can't tell even you, little book, because you really aren't mine any more.

Grandfather says some people might say my story isn't a record of real life. He says that when I get to college I'll study about realism and understand better what he means. But he believes that my story could, perhaps, be called an idyl. I looked up "idyl" in the dictionary. It means a simple description of nature without all the complications and details of business and home and social affairs included, like a pastoral in tone composition. So that's what I shall

call you, little book, "A Cape Cod Idyl." John Dyer thinks—but that's for other pages, not for yours.

\* \* \*

Grandfather says I have kept my promise to Madre in writing this record. That makes me very happy. And I whisper to you, dear book, as she whispered to me, "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."









